

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 OSLO 00893 021201Z

61

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 INR-10 L-03 NEA-10

NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 USIA-15 TRSE-00

SAM-01 SAJ-01 DODE-00 SS-20 NSC-10 EB-11 COME-00

OMB-01 MC-02 H-03 AEC-11 ACDA-19 DRC-01 /160 W

----- 095697

R 021024Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7899

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USNMR/SHAPE

USCINCEUR

CINCUSAFE

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 0893

MILITARY ADDRESSEES ALSO FOR POLADS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS EBXP BE NE NO DA

SUBJECT: F-104 REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT

REF: STATE 38015

BEGIN SUMMARY. THOUGH DISAPPOINTED THAT OUR LETTER MAKES NO
REFERENCE TO ASSISTANCE IN FINANCING AN F-104 REPLACEMENT,
THE NORWEGIANS ARE APPRECIATIVE OF OUR LETTER AND THINK IT
WILL BE HELPFUL. THEY STILL FORESEE DIFFICULTIES IN BRINGING
THE OTHERS, PARTICULARLY THE BELGIAMS, AROUND TO A DECISION
TO BUY AMERICAN. THEY HAVE, MEANWHILE, SCHEDULED CONSULTATIONS
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PAGE 02 OSLO 00893 021201Z

IN THE COMING WEEKS WITH DANES, BELGIANS, DUTCH, AND WEST

GERMANS. END SUMMARY.

1. DEFENSE MINISTER FOSTERVOLL EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR LETTER ON F-104 REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT AND SAID IT SEEMS TO BE A VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION TO HIS CURRENT EFFORTS TO MOULD A DECISION ON COMMON PROCUREMENT. ASIDE FROM STATING AT THE END OF OUR CONVERSATION THAT HE MIGHT HAVE SOME QUESTIONS OR REQUESTS AFTER FULLER STUDY OF THE LETTER, HE LEFT MOST OF THE DISCUSSION TO SECRETARY GENERAL ERIK HIMLE WHO WAS ALSO PRESENT WHEN I DELIVERED THE LETTER MARCH 1.

2. HIMLE DID NOT CONCEAL HIS DISAPPOINTMENT THAT THE LETTER SAYS NOTHING ABOUT FINANCING, BUT HE NEVERTHELESS TERMED IT A "VALUABLE FIRST STEP." HE RECOGNIZED THAT THE GUARANTEES WE ARE OFFERING ENTAIL CERTAIN ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES, AND HE SAID NORWAY MIGHT, AFTER STUDY, WANT TO DISCUSS ADDITIONAL MATTERS SUCH AS FINANCING OF R AND D. WITH REGARD TO MY ORAL REFERENCE TO OUR WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER FURTHER EXTENSION OF THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING, PER PARA 8 OF REFTL, HIMLE SAID NORWAY WOULD DEFINITELY BE INTERESTED IN INCREASING THE AMOUNTS IN THE MOU; THE US, HE ADDED, IS A LITTLE BEHIND IN ITS IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT.

3. HIMLE WAS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN WHO ELSE RECEIVED THE LETTER AND WONDERED WHETHER WE HAD ANY INFORMATION ON ATTITUDES OF THE FRG. I TOLD HIM I WAS AWARE GENERALLY OF A GERMAN INTEREST IN COMMONALITY AND REALIZED THAT MRCA WAS PROVING TO BE VERY EXPENSIVE. HIMLE'S OWN THOUGHT, HE SAID, WAS THAT THE GERMANS MIGHT GO FOR A MIX--SOME MRCA AND SOME OF THE LESS-EXPENSIVE MODEL CHOSEN BY THE OTHER COUNTRIES AS F-104 REPLACEMENT. HE REFERRED TO CONVERSATIONS WITH PRESIDENT JONES OF NORTHROP AND SAID JONES HAS SOME KIND OF UNDERSTANDING THAT THERE IS AN INTEREST ON THE PART OF THE GERMANS, BUT THE NORWEGIANS DON'T KNOW JUST WHAT THAT INTEREST IS.

4. ON TIMING, HIMLE SAID THE NORWEGIANS ARE PLANNING A SERIES OF MEETINGS--FIRST WITH THE DANES, THEN ON MARCH 28 WITH THE BELGIANS AND MARCH 29 WITH THE DUTCH. (MAAG CHIEF HAS BEEN INFORMED THAT THESE MEETINGS WILL BE CONDUCTED EITHER CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 OSLO 00893 021201Z

BY HIMLE OR BY GENERAL HAMRE, CHIEF OF MATERIEL.) IF IT APPEARS FROM THESE INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS THAT THERE IS A COMMON PLATFORM, FOSTERVOLL WILL CALL A MEETING OF DEFENSE MINISTERS OF THE FOUR COUNTRIES. IN ADDITION, HIMLE ADDED, A NORWEGIAN DELEGATION WILL VISIT THE FRG THE LATTER HALF OF APRIL FOR BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS AND WILL ASCERTAIN DURING THAT VISIT WHETHER THERE IS ANY GERMAN INTEREST IN A JOINT VENTURE ON F-104 REPLACEMENT.

5. REFERRING TO THE EFFORTS OF THE FRENCH, HIMLE SAID THEIR COMPETITION IS "NO PROBLEM HERE" BECAUSE NORWAY HAS ALWAYS BEEN ORIENTED TOWARD THE US ON AIRCRAFT AND DOES NOT ITSELF PLAN TO GO INTO PRODUCTION OF AIRCRAFT. FURTHER SOUTH, HOWEVER, AND ESPECIALLY IN BELGIUM, THERE IS A REAL PROBLEM. FOR THE BELGIANS IN PARTICULAR IT IS, IN HIMLE'S OPINION, LARGELY A MATTER OF PRESTIGE AND INDEPENDENCE IN DEVELOPING A EUROPEAN AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY. HE AGREED WITH MY OBSERVATIONS THAT THERE WOULD BE TEMENDOUS ADVANTAGES FOR EUROPEAN INDUSTRY IN HAVING ACCESS TO US TECHNOLOGY, BUT HE NEVERTHELESS SEEMED TO FORESEE PROBLEMS IN OVERCOMING BELGIAN RESISTANCE TO TYING THE FUTURE OF ITS AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY INTO A US DESIGN.

6. COMMENT: THERE WILL BE TWO FRENCH DELEGATIONS IN OSLO NEXT WEEK TO PUSH THE SALE OF MIRAGE F-1. OUR LETTER WAS THUS VERY TIMELY AND, THOUGH IT MAY NOT HAVE GONE AS FAR AS THE NORWEGIANS WOULD HAVE HOPED, I BELIEVE IT WILL BE EXTREMELY HELPFUL IN REINFORCING THE NORWEGIAN PREFERENCE FOR A US REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT.
BYRNE

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